Industry, Commerce and External Affairs, among others RBI and many high officials of various economic ministries also participated in it. Representatives of various international corporations, policy makers of Central and State Governments, Chief Executive Officers of PSUs and leading Indian companies also took part in it. Foreign delegates included representatives of foreign governments and diplomats besides a number of leading foreign companies interested in investing in India.

The conference highlighted the investment opportunities in thrust sectors and other areas in India in the context of ongoing economic reforms and liberalisation and the emerging global economic. There were interactive sessions in which the foreign delegates sought and got clarifications from Ministers and senior Government officials regarding various issues and policy matters.

Import of Coconut and Other Coconut Items

2163. SHRI N.K. PREMCHANDRAN : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have decided to import value added products from coconut like coconut Cream/ milk and spray dried coconut milk powder;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Government are aware that the above decision would adversely affect the indigenous industries in Kerala;

(d) if so, whether the Government propose to review the above decision and provide financial assistance for developing the indigenous industries for producing value added products form coconut; and

(e) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) to (c). Import of coconut cream and coconut milk powder has been permitted freely vide Government of India, Ministry of Commerce Notification No.8(RE-96)/92-97 dated 21st August, 1996, after interministerial consultations with a view to widening the trade among the SAARC countries.

(d) and (e). Review of the Export and Import Policy is a continuous process and changes in it are made as and when considered necessary, in the public interest.

[Translation]

Withdrawal of Pass Scheme

2164. SHRI R.L.P. VERMA : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to withdraw the existing pass book scheme; and

(b) if so, the reasons therefor and the alternative arrangements made to compensate the losses to be suffered by the exporter as a result thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) and (b). The Passbook Scheme has been introduced w.e.f. 1.4.95. The details of the scheme are given in Para 54 of the EXIM policy and para 114 of the Handbook of Procedures, Vol. 1 (RE-MARCH, 1996).

At present there is no proposal to withdraw the existing passbook scheme.

[English]

Salt Production in Gujarat

2165. SHRI SHANTILAL PARSOTAMDAS PATEL : Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether 70% of salt is produced in Gujarat and supplied throughout the country;

(b) whether there is a demand for shifting the Salt Commissioner's office to Gujarat in order to see the production and supply of salt in the State;

(c) whether wagons for supply of salt are adequate in Gujarat to meet the demand; and

(d) if not, the steps being taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN) : (a) Yes, Sir. Gujarat contributes about 70% of the total salt produced in the country.

(b) There had been a consistent demand from the Government of Gujarat, Salt Manufacturers' Associations of Gujarat, etc. for shifting the Salt Commissioner's Headquarters Office to Gujarat. Considering the various aspects of the matter the Government had ordered for shifting of that Office to Gandhinagar (Gujarat) in October, 1994. However the All India Salt Department Employees' Union filed a Writ Petition in the Rajasthan High Court against the said orders and obtained a stay. The matter is now pending before the Hon'ble High Court and is therefore subjudice.

(c) Yes, Sir. At present there has been adequate supply of wagons for movement of salt from Gujarat.

(d) Question does not arise.

Liquidation of P.S.Us by BIFR

2166. SHRI PRADIP BHATTACHARYA :
SHRI PRAMOTHES MUKHERJEE :

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) the details of P.S.Us recommended for liquidation by the BIFR as on date;

(b) whether Board for Industrial and Financial Reconstruction (BIFR) decision to liquidate some of the